

In the world's top 18 coastline destinations!

Moray Firth shores impress global gurus

Fans of far flung climes may be well familiar with the sun kissed sands of the Cook Islands, the captivating coastline of Italy's Cinque Terre and the breathtaking beauty of Namibia's Skeleton Coast.

But they're not a patch on the Moray Firth Coast, according to a survey by National Geographic Traveller magazine.

A panel of 340 experts at the international magazine has rated Scotland's rugged shores amongst some of the most breathtaking coasts in the world.

The panel, made up of experts in sustainable tourism, was asked to rate different locations using criteria such as environmental quality, social and cultural integrity, the condition of historic sites, aesthetic appeal and outlook for the future. This is not a popularity contest.

The stunning stretch of seafront from Inverness to Peterhead was one of only two UK spots to secure the accolade, with Pembrokeshire in Wales also being credited. And just look at these locations which are listed much – in some cases much much - lower than the Moray Firth for their quality: Mallorca, The Algarve, Seychelles, Bermuda, Jamaica, Antarctic peninsula, Florida, California, Tenerife, Maldives, Crete, Australia's Gold Coast, Spain's Costa Blanca, Sharm el Sheikh!

Some of the comments from the expert panel included:-

"A popular vacation spot for more than a century, this coast offers 'outstanding cliff scenery' and maintains 'a strong community feeling.' Seasonal and year-round residents appear to live in relative harmony. Tourism keeps 'pretty coastal villages' economically afloat as Scotland's fishing industry declines."

"A wonderful region of Scotland. Beaches are fantastic, and the area welcomes visitors as one of their own. Largely rural. People work together for the greater good—fishermen tolerate canoeists; farmers allow walkers to pass over their land on footpaths, etc."

"An undiscovered gem with pretty coastal villages, excellent beaches, and outstanding cliff scenery."

"A lot of self-catering accommodation and second homes. The area is attractive to walkers, cyclists, wildlife watchers, and surfers. It also offers whale and dolphin watching."